

March 26, 2019

Ms. Connie Quintana, President
Members of the Board of Education
Adams County School District 14
5291 East 60th Avenue
Commerce City, CO 80022

Dear Ms. Quintana and Members of the Board:

We are still shaking our heads in disbelief following the receipt of the surprise “resolution” from the Adams 14 Board of Education this past evening. We are both shocked and disappointed by this action.

We ended last week with the understanding and expectation that we would meet with you for a conversation facilitated by the Commissioner of Education at the Colorado Department of Education by the first week of April (per the doodle poll from CDE). Additionally, although we had prepared a response for your consideration, following the equally-surprising letter that we received moments before our scheduled business meeting last week, your board took additional action before we had the opportunity to deliver the letter.

We submitted our proposal in good-faith, expecting that you and your board would at least meet with us to discuss your concerns at a reasonable time and with the willingness to reach agreement on matters within the scope of our proposal.

With that said, as your board’s selected External Management Partner, this will confirm that we remain committed to fulfilling our promise, establishing a successful intergovernmental relationship with you, and, by working together, helping the Adams 14 School District community.

We, too, were disappointed that the State Board of Education deferred and did not make a decision on our proposal and your board’s selection of Mapleton Public Schools as your public management entity. We both know that time is of the essence. Every day that goes by is time that students cannot get back or fully recover.

Further, as your EMO, this will also confirm that we will, of course, engage additional partners to work with you and us. The fact that Superintendent Ciancio did not “name” that partner at the State Board meeting should not be interpreted as any indication of a lack of commitment in that regard, much less a refusal to do so. To the contrary, Ms. Ciancio and our representatives have stated countless times that they and we will do whatever is necessary to accomplish our mutual goal, including, as necessary, retaining the most qualified and affordable experts to help guide and direct the work. Currently, Adams 14 holds contracts and partnerships with both Schools Cubed and Beyond Textbooks. It is our operating assumption that those two partners would continue their work alongside Mapleton, at least until further evaluations are complete. Is that a correct assumption?

Our selection of any additional supporting partner or partners, however, must include you and your stakeholders and be informed by on-the-ground assessment of root causes, any deficiencies, and tightly-focused remedies and interventions. Any other, “top down,” unilateral approach is doomed to stakeholder resistance and, quite likely, ultimate failure. We believe last evening’s resolution to be that type of approach and to suffer from the same concerns regardless of whether the designated “additional partners” might be regarded by some as the Board’s first runner-up to Mapleton Public Schools.

To the extent the State Board's comments implied any resistance on our district's part to name an additional partner on the spot, we feel that we were in good company with you as it seemed your board was equally pressed to commit to a delegation of authority, particularly as related to hiring and "firing" or releasing employees. We would like to meet and have a conversation with your board to hear what parameters you are thinking of in that regard.

Tom Moe, the vice-president for our board, attended the community meeting held at Adams City High School last Wednesday evening. Your attorney publicly stated that Mapleton's request for "full-authority" in the initial phases of a partnership, was "new information." As a point of clarification, our proposal included a framework for the gradual release of responsibility and authority in Section 3, number 8 (page 39). Since your board approved Mapleton as the EMO, it was also our operating assumption that you were aware of that section of the proposal.

The Resolution that you adopted yesterday does not clarify your board's position on this critical authority issue. While the Resolution "reiterates its willingness to delegate the authority required by the State Board of Education's Order," there is no indication of the extent of that delegation. The State Board's order is not clear on these delegation issues as evidenced by the questions from State Board members and your responses at the hearing. The Order uses words such as "recruiting and retaining personnel," "recruiting and recommending management operators needed for individual schools," "recommending to the local board needed changes to the District's collective bargaining agreement," "evaluating district policies and recommending amendments, revisions, or deletions to the local board." This language falls short of defining the actual parameters of your board's willingness to delegate, thus the reason for our request to meet.

As stated above, we invite you to explore your thoughts with us now before the next meeting of the State Board members so that we can present a united front to them, either with discrete, delegated powers concerning the points in the State Board's Order or a deliberate and thoughtful way to resolve any issues that may arise between us as we move forward together.

In short, we would like to discuss your comfort and openness in being more specific in defining the authority that you are willing to delegate to meet both the letter and spirit of the State Board's Order. In turn, we pledge to accomplish sustainable change with additional partners, as we may mutually determine to be necessary and select in the future.

Thank you for your courtesy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cynthia R. Croisant". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Cynthia R. Croisant, President
For the Board of Education

cc: Tom Moe, Board Member
Steve Donnell, Board Member
Sheila Montoya, Board Member
Natalie Lord, Board Member
Charlotte Ciano, Superintendent
Richard E. Bump, Caplan & Earnest LLC